

AUTHORIZING THE ACQUISITION BY THE UNITED STATES OF
LANDS LYING BETWEEN THE PRESENT BOUNDARY OF THE
NAVAL AIR STATION, LAKEHURST, N. J., AND THE NEW BOUND-
ARY OF FORT DIX, IN THE COUNTY OF OCEAN AND STATE OF
NEW JERSEY

MARCH 26 (legislative day, MARCH 5), 1942.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. WALSH, from the Committee on Naval Affairs, submitted the
following

REPORT

[To accompany H. R. 4151]

The Committee on Naval Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 4151) to authorize the acquisition by the United States of lands lying between the present boundary of the naval air station, Lakehurst, N. J., and the new boundary of Fort Dix, in the county of Ocean and State of New Jersey, having considered the same, report favorably thereon without amendment and recommend that the bill do pass.

The bill was originally reported to the Senate on January 27, 1942, without amendments. After the bill was reported to the Senate an attorney, representing the owners of the land in question, communicated with the committee and complained that the price to be paid for the land was insufficient and did not represent a fair value of the land. The attorney's letter was referred to the Navy Department for comment and return.

The Navy Department reported that the price contemplated to be paid for the land was determined by preliminary appraisals of the land by two qualified and disinterested appraisers and, in the opinion of the Navy Department, the price was fair and ample.

The committee again recommend enactment of the bill with the understanding that the price to be paid will be adjusted satisfactorily or, as an alternative, the Navy Department will obtain the land by condemnation proceedings.

The letter from the Navy Department regarding the value of the land is hereby made a part of this report.

NAVY DEPARTMENT,
Washington, D. C., March 14, 1942.

The Honorable DAVID I. WALSH,
United States Senate.

SIR: Further reference is made to your letter dated January 29, 1942, enclosing a letter you received from J. Quincy Hunsicker, of 118 South Twentieth Street, Philadelphia, Pa., concerning the value of the lands involved in the bill (H. R. 4151) to authorize the acquisition by the United States of lands lying between the present boundary of the naval air station, Lakehurst, N. J., and the new boundary of Fort Dix, in the county of Ocean and State of New Jersey.

The Acting Secretary of the Navy, in his letter to the chairman, Committee on Naval Affairs, House of Representatives, dated January 16, 1941, reporting on the subject bill, stated that it was estimated that the land included in the bill was valued at \$5 per acre, and it was therefore considered that the total cost would not exceed \$30,000.

The Navy Department has requested an appraisal of the land by two qualified appraisers in the locality and is in receipt of a letter from R. F. Morales, dated February 3, 1942, stating that preliminary appraisal indicates the land is worth approximately \$3 per acre. The Navy Department is also in receipt of a letter from E. G. Berry, dated February 3, 1942, stating that provisional appraisal of the property included in the subject bill is approximately \$3 per acre. The two gentlemen mentioned will conduct a complete appraisal for the Navy Department in this matter.

Delay in answering your letter has been due to the fact that it was believed that the complete appraisal of the property would be received by the Navy Department very shortly after the request for the appraisal was made. However, it subsequently developed that a complete survey of the property had to be made first, and this fact has caused delay in securing the appraisal.

In view of the delay that has been encountered concerning the subject legislation to this date, it is thought that possibly your committee might report the bill favorably on the basis of the information submitted in this letter without waiting for a complete appraisal of the property which has not been rendered to date.

The Navy Department, from the facts at hand, is still of the opinion that the land included in the subject bill is not of a greater value than \$5 per acre and it is, therefore, still considered that the total cost will not exceed \$30,000.

If the information submitted by this letter is not satisfactory for the committee's purposes, the Navy Department will, as soon as the final appraisal is made, submit additional information concerning the value of the lands. However, if the information submitted by this letter is satisfactory for the committee's purposes, the Navy Department requests that the bill be reported favorably by your committee in order that the bill H. R. 4151, which will authorize the acquisition of the subject property, may be enacted as expeditiously as possible in the interest of national defense.

In accordance with your request, the enclosure with your letter is transmitted herewith.

Very truly yours,

JAMES FORRESTAL, *Acting.*

This bill, if enacted, would authorize the Navy Department to acquire approximately 5,673 acres of land in Ocean County, N. J. It would also repeal the act approved June 6, 1940 (54 Stat. 234). No land was acquired under that act and the present bill authorizes the acquisition of land which includes that authorized by the above act.

The land provided for in this bill is made necessary by increased lighter-than-air activities, including various experimental projects which have been assigned to the naval air station at Lakehurst. The control of the air over this ground is very essential to the accomplishment of the missions assigned to the air station at Lakehurst. This feature is as important, if not more important, than use of the land itself.

It is necessary to obtain this land which is contiguous to the naval air station at Lakehurst, in order to prevent it falling into the hands of others who, it is understood, are interested in obtaining it, with the

result that this would jeopardize, to a certain extent, the usefulness of the naval air station as a base for the operation of lighter-than-air craft.

The land intended to be purchased is estimated to have a value of \$5 per acre, and it is therefore considered that the total cost will not exceed \$30,000.

The bill meets with the approval of the Navy Department and has been cleared by the Bureau of the Budget.



resulting this would operate to a certain extent the interest in the mineral lands as a base for the operation of the same.

The land failed to be purchased as intended to have a return of 25 per cent, and the interest contained that the same was not to be sold for less than \$100,000.

It will be seen that the interest of the Navy Department and the other interests in the Bureau of the Interior.